

service; improving democratic surveillance of election monitoring; codes of conduct for peacekeepers and international representatives; and gender issues.

I was pleased to be re-elected for a third time as a Senior Officer and Treasurer and as Leader of the Liberal, Democratic and Reformer's Political group. I extend my appreciation and congratulations to our colleague, the Honourable Senator Di Nino, for his assiduous performance as head of the Canadian delegation. I intend to have the Senate consider a number of aspects of the Washington Declaration, which each parliamentary delegation was mandated to do under the declaration.

I would like to add a special word of congratulations to Speaker Dennis Hastert, of the House of Representatives, to our Congressional American hosts and to Congressman Alcee Hastings, who was re-elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Association and who invited us to share an outstanding visit to George Washington's home on Mount Vernon on the Potomac. Our hosts also invited us to participate in the festivities on Capitol Hill for their July 4 celebration, together with over one million Americans. It was a memorable experience for all of us.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 12, 2005*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, July 11, 2005, I was delayed in the Cincinnati Airport due to a mechanical failure of my plane, a parts swap, and a new plane having to be brought in for my flight from Cincinnati to Washington. There were no other flight options for me to arrive in Washington before the votes occurred on H. Con. Res. 168 (Rollcall No. 363) and H. Res. 333 (Rollcall No. 364). Had I been here to cast my votes, I would have voted "aye" on both H. Con. Res. 168 and H. Res. 333 and with the RECORD to reflect as such.

As a member of the Human Rights Caucus and a stern believer that every human being has certain irrevocable rights, I stand in strong favor of both of these pieces of legislation. We cannot and should not stand by as gross human rights violations such as the kidnappings in Korea and the genocide in Darfur continue. I applaud my colleagues, Representative HENRY HYDE and Representative DONALD PAYNE, for introducing these bills and bringing them to the floor for our consideration.

Almost 3 years ago North Korean leader Kim Jong-il admitted that North Korea had ordered abductions of Japanese citizens and promised that it would never do so again. However, evidence has surfaced that the North Korean government has continued to order the abductions of numerous foreign citizens and has placed these captives, along with prisoners of war, in forced labor camps. To stand by and do nothing in response to these gross violations of human rights is unthinkable and this bill clearly states to Kim Jong-il and the North Korean government that the United States will not let this continue.

I am also pleased that we were able to debate H. Res. 333. I have been a huge supporter of our past funding for aid to Darfur and

our condemnation of the genocide occurring there and can think of no better way to complement these actions than by praying for and reflecting on this horrible situation. The better we personally understand this situation, the better we as a Congress will be able to respond to and prevent situations such as these from occurring in the future. As a man of faith, I will stand with my family, my colleagues, and fellow citizens and pray for the people of Darfur and reflect on the ongoing atrocities that they face on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, thank you again for allowing me to express my support for these two bills as I was unfortunately delayed on my way to Washington.

#### SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF A NATIONAL WEEK-END OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION FOR DARFUR

SPEECH OF

#### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 11, 2005*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of Congressman PAYNE's resolution H. Res. 333—supporting the goals and ideals of a National Weekend of Prayer and Reflection for Darfur. The violence and ongoing humanitarian challenges that the people of Darfur continue to face necessitate that we keep them in our thoughts and prayers, and continue to ensure that the Darfur issue remains firmly within the purview of U.S. policymakers, until a final resolution is reached.

Communities of faith in the United States have always played a role in eliciting action on an array of historic moral questions. From the anti-slavery and civil rights movements in this country, to the campaign to end the terrible Ethiopian famines of the 1980's, the power of faith was brought to bear in an attempt to address an issue of human suffering.

The ongoing crisis in Darfur is one such issue, that warrants the continued engagement of the American religious community—especially when engagement from other sources has, in some instances, been lacking. The Darfur conflict has so far claimed as much as 400,000 lives, and displaced at least 2.4 million. The United States has to its credit taken the lead among world powers in addressing the conflict by providing humanitarian assistance to the Darfuri people, and applying pressure to the Sudanese government. America's religious communities have been instrumental in compelling the United States government to become involved.

However, in recent months the Administration has been rather muted on the Darfur issue. Indeed, the Administration has backed away from classifying the actions of the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed militia as genocide, and U.S. and Sudanese officials have visited each other consistently in recent months. With the recent peace agreement between the Khartoum government and the oil-producing region of southern Sudan, as well as Sudanese cooperation on U.S. terrorism efforts, there is talk of the U.S. lifting sanctions on Sudan.

Such hospitable relations are very concerning, considering the fact that the situation

in the Darfur is still dire. While the killings in aggregate have decreased, the cease-fire is extremely fragile. In the absence of the small African Union peacekeeping force, and the humanitarian assistance provided by the international community, Darfur would easily fall back into chaos. Indeed, U.N. humanitarian coordinator Manuel Aranda Da Silva said that the situation could deteriorate quickly if foreign assistance stops coming.

In addition, rape is still a widespread tactic utilized by government and its militia, as well as forced military recruitment of young people. According to officials from the United Nations High Committee on Refugees, areas outside peacekeeping observation remain very dangerous. As such, the United States must maintain its pressure on the Sudanese government, and clearly convey to them that any improvement in relations between our two countries is contingent on resolution of the Darfur crisis.

The religious community is well placed, and equipped with the moral authority, to compel the United States government not to decrease its engagement on the Darfur issue. It is my hope that communities of faith will reflect this coming weekend on the continuing crisis in Darfur—because only when we reflect, will we be emboldened to act. Again, I thank the Gentleman from New Jersey for this resolution, as our struggle for the people of Darfur is far from over.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. JOHN CONYERS JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 12, 2005*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD that on July 11th of this year, due to unavoidable circumstances, I was unable to be present. If I had been in attendance, I would like the RECORD to reflect that I would have voted in the following manner on these bills:

On H. Con. Res. 168—Condemning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the abductions and continued captivity of citizens of the Republic of Korea and Japan as acts of terrorism and gross violations of human rights I would have voted "yea."

On H. Res. 333—Supporting the goals and ideals of a National Weekend of Prayer and Reflection for Darfur, Sudan I would have voted "yea."

#### MILITARY PERSONNEL FINANCIAL SERVICES PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

#### HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 27, 2005*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support Title II of H.R. 458, the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act. Title II's provisions are especially important as they will help prevent high-cost military lenders from preying on the men and women who are serving in our Armed Forces.

This important measure provides needed protections for military borrowers from various